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Yoshiaki Sato

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01/07/2009

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EXAMINER

ABYANEH, SHILA

ART UNIT

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4135

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DELIVERY MODE

01/07/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/568,352	Applicant(s) SATO, YOSHIAKI	
	Examiner SHILA ABYANEH	Art Unit 4135	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 June 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 14 February 2006 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>02/14/2006, 12/14/2007 and 06/02/2008</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the separable first and third input means must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The term "Critical" in claims 1, 3-4, 8-11 and 16-17 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "Critical" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

3. The term "Maximum" in claims 11 and 17 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "Maximum" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-4, 6-12 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McEwen US Patent No. 4,469,099.

McEwen anticipates:

Limitations from Claim 1, a muscle strength increasing system used for developing muscles of at least one of the limbs of a wearer while restricting the blood flow there through by means of applying a predetermined compression pressure to said limb, the muscle strength increasing system comprising a muscle strength increasing device having a compressing member for tightening and compressing muscles and a compression pressure controller for controlling said compression pressure, said compression pressure controller being for controlling said compression pressure so that it does not exceed a preset critical compression pressure, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet including an inflatable cuff (10 in Fig. 1 below), pressurizing means (14) for pressurizing the cuff, a pressure relief means (16) and a pressure regulator that activates the pressurizing means or the relief means to in order to maintain a selected pressure, col. 3 lines 1-22.

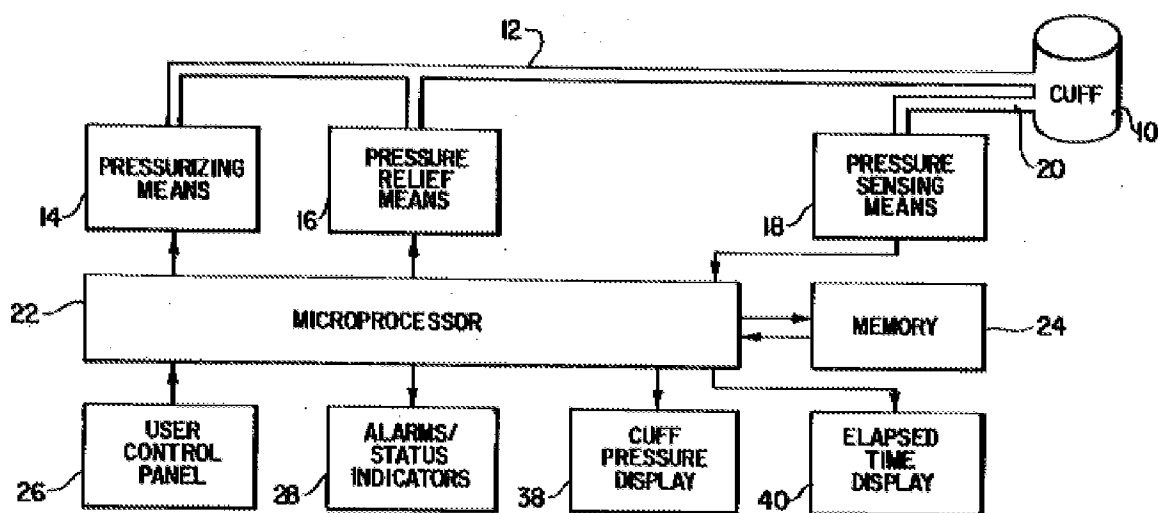


FIG. 1

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Limitations from Claim 2, the muscle strength increasing system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said muscle strength increasing device comprises a hollow tight fitting band having a tube therein to which the air is to be supplied with a predetermined pump, and fastening means for use in keeping a length of said tight fitting band in a loop having a desired size, the muscle strength increasing system comprising a pressure gauge for measuring the air pressure within said tube, said compression pressure controller being adapted to control said compression pressure based on the air pressure within said tube that is measured by said pressure gauge, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with an inflatable cuff that is wrapped around the limb of a user, a pressure sensing means which includes an electronic pressure transducer, an electronic air pump within the pressurizing means and a hose that connects the inflatable cuff to the air pump, col. 3 lines 1-28 and col. 4 lines 20-30.

Limitations from Claim 3, the muscle strength increasing system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said compression pressure controller has setting means which can set the maximum value of said compression pressure at a desired pressure, said setting means being configured to set the maximum value of said compression pressure without exceeding said critical compression pressure, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with a control panel which enables a user to select a desired pressure value. However, the maximum pressure within the cuff can not exceed 500 mmHg, col. 3 lines 25-27 and col. 4 lines 31-39.

Limitations from Claim 4, a muscle strength increasing system used for developing muscles of at least one of the limbs of a wearer while restricting the blood flow there through by means of applying a predetermined compression pressure to said limb, the muscle strength increasing system comprising a muscle strength increasing device having a compressing member for tightening and compressing muscles and a compression pressure controller for controlling said compression pressure, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with an inflatable cuff that wraps around a limb of a user and a pressure regulator mechanism which regulates the pressure within the cuff, col. 3 lines 1-22, said compression pressure controller being configured to control said compression pressure so that the time interval during which said compression pressure is applied to the wearer falls within a range that does not exceed a preset critical compression duration, Wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with a control panel that a user may use to select a time period for the air pump to pump air into the cuff. The selected time period is within 0-180 minutes range, col. 2 lines 65-68 and col. 4 lines 34-39.

Limitations from Claim 6, the muscle strength increasing system as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said compression pressure controller has setting means with which said predetermined time interval can be set at a desired time interval, said predetermined time interval that is set by said setting means is determined not to

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exceed a predetermined setting time interval, Wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with a control panel that a user may use to select a time period during which an air pump, pumps air into the cuff. The selected time period is within 0-180 minutes range, col. 2 lines 65-68 and col. 4 lines 34-39.

Limitations from Claim 7, a muscle strength increasing system used for developing muscles of at least one of the limbs of a wearer while restricting the blood flow there through by means of applying a predetermined compression pressure to said limb, the muscle strength increasing system comprising a muscle strength increasing device having a compressing member for tightening and compressing muscles and a compression pressure controller for controlling said compression pressure, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with an inflatable cuff that wraps around a limb of a user and a pressure regulator mechanism which regulates the pressure within the cuff, col. 3 lines 1-22, said compression pressure controller being for controlling said compression pressure and/or the time interval during which said compression pressure is applied to said limbs, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with a control panel which enables a user to select a desired pressure value. However, the maximum pressure within the cuff can not exceed 500 mmHg. Also a user can select a time period for the air pump to pump air into the cuff. The selected time period is within 0-180 minutes range, col. 3 lines 25-27, col. 4 lines 31-39, col. 2 lines 65-68 and col. 4 lines 34-39.

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Limitations from Claim 8, a compression pressure control unit of a muscle strength increasing device for controlling a predetermined compression pressure used for developing muscles of at least one of the limbs of a wearer while restricting the blood flow there through by means of applying said compression pressure to said limb, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with an inflatable cuff that wraps around a limb of a user and a pressure regulator mechanism which regulates the pressure within the cuff, col. 3 lines 1-22,

the compression pressure control unit having a compressing member tightening and compressing muscles, the compression pressure control unit controlling said compression pressure so that it does not exceed a preset critical compression pressure, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with a control panel which enables a user to select a desired pressure value. However, the maximum pressure within the cuff can not exceed 500 mmHg, col. 3 lines 8-27.

Limitations from Claim 9, a compression pressure control unit of a muscle strength increasing device for controlling a predetermined compression pressure used for developing muscles of at least one of the limbs of a wearer while restricting the blood flow there through by means of applying said compression pressure to said limb, the compression pressure control unit having a compressing member tightening and compressing muscles, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with an inflatable cuff that wraps around a limb of a user

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and a pressure regulator mechanism which regulates the pressure within the cuff, col. 3 lines 1-22,

the compression pressure control unit controlling said compression pressure so that the time interval during which said compression pressure is applied to the wearer falls within a range that does not exceed a preset critical compression duration, wherein McEwen discloses a tourniquet with a control panel that a user may use to select a time period for the air pump to pump air into the cuff. The selected time period is within 0-180 minutes range, col. 2 lines 65-68 and col. 4 lines 34-39.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McEwen as applied to claim 4 above, and further in view of Burgert et al. US Patent No. 4,984,579.

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McEwen teaches a tourniquet including an inflatable cuff, a pressurizing means such as a pump which is connected to the cuff via a hose, a pressure regulator, a processor, a control panel and a transducer. The processor is preprogrammed to have a critical pressure value of 500 mmHg and a critical time duration of 180 minutes. The control panel enables a user to select a desired value of pressure and time which may not exceed the critical values. However, McEwen does not specifically state a system in which the pressure drops once the pre-selected time is elapsed, but Burgert does.

Burgert teaches:

Limitations from Claim 5, the muscle strength increasing system as claimed in Claim 4, wherein said compression pressure controller has time counting means for measuring time during which said compression pressure is applied, said compression pressure controller being adapted to reduce said compression pressure when the time measured by the time counting means exceeds a predetermined time interval, wherein Burgert teaches an apparatus including a timer that once the timer runs reaches a predetermined time limit, a pressure regulator decreases the pressure that is applied by a pump, col. 4 lines 21-24.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to recognize that combining Burgert's invention with McEwen's invention would have been beneficial since a patient (user) will not be

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exposed to a high pressure for an extended time if the physician is not present when the timer reaches the amount of time selected. Also it is beneficial to prevent over pressurizing and damaging a muscle.

8. Claims 10 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McEwen as applied to claims 8-9 above, and further in view of Ono et al. US Patent No. 5,755,669.

McEwen teaches a tourniquet including an inflatable cuff, a pressurizing means such as a pump which is connected to the cuff via a hose, a pressure regulator, a processor, a control panel and a transducer. The processor is preprogrammed to have a critical pressure value of 500 mmHg and a critical time duration of 180 minutes. The control panel enables a user to select a desired value of pressure and time which may not exceed the critical values. Even though McEwen teaches a system in which a user may input a value of pressure or time through a control panel (input means), McEwen does not specifically teach a system in which the critical or threshold values may be recorded and input into the system, but Ono does.

Ono teaches:

Limitations from Claim 10, The compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 8, comprising first recording means on which said critical compression pressure is recorded, the compression pressure control unit being for controlling

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said compression pressure based on said critical compression pressure recorded on the first recording means, the compression pressure control unit comprising predetermined first input means for supplying said critical compression pressure to said first recording means through its operation, wherein Ono teaches a blood pressure monitoring apparatus with blood pressure storage means as well as threshold storage means for storing the blood pressure change threshold that are inputted from external sources (input means). Although it is not exclusively stated, the monitoring system of Ono's invention is capable of storing critical or threshold blood pressure as well, col. 2 lines 1-5 and col. 10 lines 25-31 and lines 55-59.

Limitations from Claim 16, The compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 9, comprising third recording means on which said critical compression duration is recorded, the compression pressure control unit being for controlling said compression pressure based on the critical compression duration recorded on the third recording means, the compression pressure control unit comprising predetermined third input means for entering said critical compression duration to said third recording means through its operation, wherein Ono teaches a blood pressure monitoring system with a threshold storage means for storing the propagation time change threshold. Although it is not exclusively stated, Ono's system is capable of storing a threshold or critical time duration, col. 2 lines 1-5 and col. 10 lines 25-31 and lines 55-59.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to recognize that combining Ono's invention with McEwen's invention would have been beneficial since the user's limb will not be over pressurized which can cause damages to the muscles as well as the nerves within the particular part of the body under pressure. Also depending on the level of fitness of the user as well as their age, the critical pressure value may be different. Therefore, the muscles of an elderly will not be pressurized under the same pressure for a long time as the muscles of a young athlete would.

9. Claims 11-12 and 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McEwen and Ono as applied to claims 8-10 and 16 above, and further in view of Lamrpoulos et al. US Patent No. 5,458,571.

McEwen teaches a tourniquet including an inflatable cuff, a pressurizing means such as a pump which is connected to the cuff via a hose, a pressure regulator, a processor, a control panel and a transducer. The processor is preprogrammed to have a critical pressure value of 500 mmHg and a critical time duration of 180 minutes. The control panel enables a user to select a desired value of pressure and time which may not exceed the critical values. Even though McEwen teaches a system in which a user may input a value of pressure or time through a control panel (input means), McEwen does not specifically teach a system in

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which a maximum amount of pressure and time is recorded, but Lampropoulos does.

Lampropoulos teaches:

Limitations from Claim 11, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 10, comprising second recording means on which the maximum value of said compression pressure is recorded, the compression pressure control unit being for controlling said compression pressure based on the maximum value of said compression pressure recorded on the second recording means, the compression pressure control unit comprising:

predetermined second input means for supplying the maximum value of said compression pressure to said second recording means through its operation, the maximum value of said compression pressure recorded on 5 said second recording means being controlled not to exceed said critical compression pressure, wherein Lampropoulos teaches a control system in which the control parameters such as maximum inflation pressure can be selected, inputted and recorded in to the system. Therefore, although not exclusively stated, it is implied that an input means as well as a recording means (such as memory) is within the system, col. 4 lines 26-32, lines 54-62 and col. 14 lines 30-46.

Limitations from Claim 17, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 16, comprising fourth recording means on which the maximum value of a

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time interval during which said compression pressure is applied to the wearer is recorded, the compression pressure control unit being for controlling said compression pressure based on the maximum value of the time interval during which said compression pressure is applied, which is recorded on the fourth recording means, the compression pressure control unit comprising predetermined fourth input means for entering said maximum value of the time interval during which said compression pressure is applied to the wearer, to said fourth recording means through its 5 operation, said maximum value of the time interval during which said compression pressure is applied to the wearer, which is recorded on said fourth recording means, being controlled not to exceed said critical compression duration, wherein Lampropoulos teaches a control system in which the control parameters such as maximum duration of time for applying inflation pressure can be selected, inputted and recorded in to the system. Therefore, even through not exclusively stated, it is implied that an input means as well as a recording means (such as memory) is within the system, col. 4 lines 26-32, lines 54-62 and col. 14 lines 30-46.

Limitations from Claim 12, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 11 comprising a main body having said second recording means, wherein said first input means can freely be attached to and removed from said main body.

Limitations from Claim 18, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 17, comprising a main body having said fourth recording means, wherein said third input means can freely be attached to and removed from said main body.

Regarding claims 12 and 18:

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to separate two components (input means and controller unit) within a system, since it has been held that constructing a formerly integral structure in various elements involves only routine skill in the art. *Nerwin v. Erlichman*, 168 USPQ 177, 179.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to recognize that combining Lampropoulos' invention with McEwen's and Ono's inventions would have been beneficial to a physician or trainer to input and record a certain value for a user, since users of a particular age may have different fitness levels and even though their critical pressure and time values are the same, their maximum may be different based on their fitness or medical conditions. As a result, a user with a medical condition or a low fitness level may be put under a lower pressure for a lower amount of time (whatever

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value that is maximum for that person) than a person of the same age who is healthy with a high fitness level.

10. Claims 13-15 and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McEwen, Ono and Lampropoulos as applied to claims 8-11 and 16-17 above, and further in view of Englehardt et al. US Patent No. 4,831,242.

McEwen teaches a tourniquet including an inflatable cuff, a pressurizing means such as a pump which is connected to the cuff via a hose, a pressure regulator, a processor, a control panel and a transducer. The processor is preprogrammed to have a critical pressure value of 500 mmHg and a critical time duration of 180 minutes. The control panel enables a user to select a desired value of pressure and time which may not exceed the critical values. However, neither McEwen nor Ono and Lampropoulos exclusively teach a system that authenticates data being input into it, but Englehardt does.

Englehardt teaches:

Limitations from Claim 13, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 11, comprising authentication means for determining whether or not an input from said first input means is allowed, wherein the input from said first input means is accepted only when said authentication means performs authentication indicating that the input is permitted, wherein Englehardt teaches a control

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system with an input device that includes a card reader for reading a membership card to authenticate a user, col. 2 lines 18-24.

Limitations from Claim 14, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said authentication means comprises:

an authentication operator for entering data for authentication; and
decision means for determining whether the data for authentication received from the authentication operator are valid, said authentication being made when said authentication means determines that said data for authentication are valid, wherein Englehardt teaches a control system with an input device including a card reader that identifies a user based on the information on their card. Although it is not exclusively stated, it is implied that a decision means must exist in order to authorize a user based on the information provided on the card, col. 2 lines 18-24, col. 3 lines 12-14, col. 6 lines 40-63 and col. 7 lines 20-32.

Limitations from Claim 15, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said authentication means comprises:

reading means for reading data for authentication from a predetermined recording medium; and
decision means for determining whether said data for authentication read by the reading means are valid;
said authentication being made when said authentication means determines that

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said data for authentication are valid, wherein Englehardt teaches a control system with an input device including a card reader that identifies a user based on the information on their card. Although it is not exclusively stated, it is implied that a decision means must exist in order to authorize a user based on the information provided on the card, col. 2 lines 18-24, col. 3 lines 12-14, col. 6 lines 40-63 and col. 7 lines 20-32.

Limitations from Claim 19, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 17, comprising authentication means for determining whether or not an input from said third input means is allowed, wherein the input from said third input means is accepted only when said authentication means performs authentication indicating that the input is permitted, wherein the input from said first input means is accepted only when said authentication means performs authentication indicating that the input is permitted, wherein Englehardt teaches a control system with an input device including a card reader that identifies a user based on the information on their card. Although it is not exclusively stated, it is implied that a decision means must exist in order to authorize a user based on the information provided on the card, col. 2 lines 18-24, col. 3 lines 12-14, col. 6 lines 40-63 and col. 7 lines 20-32.

Limitations from Claim 20, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 19, wherein said authentication means comprises:

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an authentication operator for entering data for authentication; and
decision means for determining whether the data for authentication received from the authentication operator are valid, said authentication being made when said authentication means determines that said data for authentication are valid, wherein Englehardt teaches a control system with an input device including a card reader that identifies a user based on the information on their card. Although it is not exclusively stated, it is implied that a decision means must exist in order to authorize a user based on the information provided on the card, col. 2 lines 18-24, col. 3 lines 12-14, col. 6 lines 40-63 and col. 7 lines 20-32.

Limitations from Claim 21, the compression pressure control unit as claimed in Claim 19, wherein said authentication means comprises:

reading means for reading data for authentication from a predetermined recording medium; and

decision means for determining whether said data for authentication read by the reading means are valid;

said authentication being made when said authentication means determines that said data for authentication are valid, wherein Englehardt teaches a control system with an input device including a card reader that identifies a user based on the information on their card. Although it is not exclusively stated, it is implied that a decision means must exist in order to authorize a user based on the

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information provided on the card, col. 2 lines 18-24, col. 3 lines 12-14, col. 6 lines 40-63 and col. 7 lines 20-32.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to recognize that combining Englehardt's invention with McEwen's, Ono's and Lampropoulos' inventions would have been beneficial to allow a user who is authorized to change and store various information in their profile and exercise accordingly. The combination will prevent others to change or store any information that is not relevant to the user or is dangerous for the user.

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Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SHILA ABYANEH whose telephone number is (571)270-7403. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (8:00 am to 5:00 pm EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William M. Brewster can be reached on 571-272-1854. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

12/24/2008

/S. A./

Examiner, Art Unit 4135

/William M. Brewster/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 4135